



Interviewed: Ivan Zarenda

Oral History Clip Title: Friendship with Afrikaners

Theme: Jewish Life in Southern Africa

Interviewer: Jessica Parker

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(Interviewer)

Okay.

(Ivan)

It's just amazing how closely-knit the Jewish community was at that time. And I believe today it's even more closely-knit.

(Interviewer)

And why—

(Ivan)

The surv—The remaining Jews in South Africa.

(Interviewer)

And so why do you think it was closely-knit then?

(Ivan)

I would say the possible...not totally being accepted by other groups in South Africa. They're closely identified with the Afrikaner for some reason, who saw the Jewish experience as very much mirror-imaging their experience, the Afrikaner being the Dutch descendants who eventually became the National Party in South Africa and (inaudible) apartheid architects. They saw the Jews and their struggle for the Land of Israel being closely related to the Afrikaners' struggle for the land (laughs) of South Africa to become their homeland. And they were accepted by very much—and befriended by—the Afrikaners. The English population, on the other hand, were very antisemitic. Probably jealous. Probably stemming from traditions—

(Interviewer)

Right.

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(Ivan)

—and all that kind of thing. And the black population were, sort of, non...Even though a lot of Jewish people got involved in the freedom movement—in fact, most of the white...members of these ANC and all these other movements were Jewish in background. But the—I think the black folks felt that the Jews in general, because of their suffering in the Holocaust, did not do enough to end apartheid. So the Jews were pretty isolated in South Africa and formed their little ghettos and their friendships and their close (inaudible).

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